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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Gas

Second session
Geneva, 20-21 January 2015

Report of the Group of Experts on Gas

I. Introduction

1. The second session of the Group of Experts was held on 20-21 January 2015[1].

II. Attendance

2. The session was attended by more than 130 experts from the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

3. Experts from the Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Qatar and Tunisia participated under Article 11 of the Commission's Terms of Reference.

4. A representative of the European Union also participated.

5. Representatives of the following international and non-governmental organizations participated: Association Royale des Gaziers Belges, Danish Gas Association, European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSOG), European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), Eurogas, Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE), International Energy Agency (IEA), International Gas Union (IGU), International Group of Liquefied Natural

[1] *Official documents* of the session are available at http://documents.un.org/. Unofficial room documents and presentations delivered at the meeting are available on the ECE website at: http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=36606#/.

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Gas Importers (GIIGNL), GASNAM, Marcogaz, Moscow International Petroleum Club, Natural Gas Vehicles Association Europe (NGVA Europe), NGV Global, and Society of International Gas Tanker and Terminal Operators (SIGTTO).

6. The private sector and academia were also represented.

III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

7. The provisional agenda as contained in ECE/ENERGY/GE.8/2015/1 was adopted without amendment.

IV. Elections of officers (agenda item 2)

8. No new Bureau members were nominated. The members of the Bureau as elected at the first session were confirmed as follows: Mr. Francisco P. de la Flor Garcia (Spain) as Chair, and Mr. Natiq Abbasov (Azerbaijan), Mr. Torstein Indrebø (International Gas Union), Mr. Jan Ingwersen (ENTSOG), Mr. Alexander Karasevich (Russian Federation), and Mr. Tamás Körösi (Hungary) as Vice-Chairs.

V. Opening remarks from the Chair (agenda item 3)

9. A Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Chair, delivered opening remarks, outlining the Group of Experts' work plan for 2014–2015 and its four concrete tasks. Carrying out these tasks is important as each of them represents incremental contributions to the overall purpose of the Group of Experts: to provide a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on ways to promote the sustainable and clean production, distribution, and consumption of gas in the ECE region.

VI. Matters arising from the twenty-third session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy related to the Group of Experts on Gas (agenda item 4)

10. The Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-third session in November 2014 requested that the relevant expert groups prepare a coordinated, solutions-oriented report about methane management in extractive industries with a focus on establishing a baseline, benchmarking and scale of current methane emissions in those industries, with the aim of giving clear guidance to policy makers. In response to the request, the Group of Experts on Gas accepted to participate in the preparation of this report.

11. The Group of Experts recommended that other groups of experts—subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy—delegate experts and join a coordinated, solutions-oriented effort, under the lead of the Bureau of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, which would give clear guidance to policymakers on how to manage methane in a sustainable way.

12. The Group of Experts on Gas recommended that other organizations and stakeholders, such as the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short Lived Climate Pollutants of the United Nations Environment Programme, the European Union and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, be invited to join this effort.

13. The Group of Experts appreciated the communication from the Chair of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane offering to collaborate on a Task Force on methane management in extractive industries.

VII. The role of gas in achieving the goals of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative (agenda item 5)

14. The Group of Experts recognized that in any realistic future scenario the share of natural gas in the total primary energy supply will increase. Therefore, accessing new gas reserves and a sustainable and responsible production and utilization of natural gas will continue to be important for climate change mitigation.

15. The Group of Experts concluded that natural gas will have a critical role in achieving the three objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative (ensure universal access to modern energy services, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix).

16. The Group of Experts noted that natural gas could help achieve the above objectives through its role in increasing the overall efficiency of the energy system. This can be accomplished by enhancing the use of available energy-efficient technology for gas utilisation in all market segments. Flexible gas-based power plants will enable accelerated penetration of intermittent renewable energy sources. Given the level of economic and social development in the ECE region, the first objective of the Sustainable Energy for all initiative (ensure universal access to modern energy services) needs to be defined more precisely, to reflect the realities of the ECE region that already has a developed energy infrastructure.

17. The Group of Experts took note of the proposal by the International Gas Union to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with ECE.

VIII. Best practice guidance in reducing gas leaks along the gas value chain (agenda item 6)

18. The Group of Experts on Gas took note of the work of Task Force on Best Practice Guidance in Reducing Gas Leaks along the Gas Value Chain, including the challenges faced in meeting the deadlines contained in the Work Plan for 2014–2015 and recommended that the revised timeline proposed by the Task Force be submitted to the Committee on Sustainable Energy for endorsement.

19. The Group of Experts concluded that the Task Force on Best Practice Guidance in Reducing Gas Leaks along the Gas Value Chain is best positioned to contribute to the work on methane management requested by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, discussed under Agenda item 4.

20. The Group of Experts expressed its gratitude to the International Gas Union and its Working Committees for their leadership in the work on best practices in reducing gas leaks along the gas value chain.

IX. Best practice guidance on the role of natural gas in increasing the uptake of renewable energy (agenda item 7)

21. The Group of Experts took note of the work of the Task Force on the Role of Natural Gas in Increasing the Uptake of Renewable Energy and invited the Task Force to continue its activities.

22. The Group of Experts requested that its Bureau reach out to the Bureau of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy to coordinate the activities that stem from their respective work plans. The Group of Experts further recommended that the two groups' Bureaux develop proposals for joint work.

X. Best practice guidance for liquefied natural gas (agenda item 8)

23. The Group of Experts took note of the work of the Task Force on Best Practice Guidance for Liquefied Natural Gas and invited the Task Force to continue its activities.

XI. Removing barriers to the use of natural gas as a transportation fuel (agenda item 9)

24. The Group of Experts took note of the work of the Task Force on Removing Barriers to the Use of Natural Gas as a Transportation Fuel, and invited the Task Force to continue its activities, in close collaboration with the ECE regulatory and standard-setting bodies, such as the Working Party on Pollution and Energy that operates under the Inland Transport Committee's World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations.

XII. Tour de table: recent developments and medium- and long-term prospects and policies in the gas industry – country updates (agenda item 10)

25. Representatives of ECE member States and gas companies presented developments during 2014 in their countries' gas industries. The presentations are posted on the ECE natural gas website[2].

XIII. Overview of the activities of international organizations in the field of gas (agenda item 11)

26. Representatives of international organizations dealing with gas presented their activities in 2014. The presentations are posted on the ECE natural gas website[2].

XIV. Overview of the activities of other subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy related to natural gas (agenda item 12)

27. The secretariat presented an overview of the activities of the other subsidiary bodies of the Committee on Sustainable Energy of relevance to the work of the Group of Experts.

[2] http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=36606#/

XV. Work plan for 2014–2015 and for 2016–2017 (agenda item 13)

28. Noting that its Work Plan for 2014–2015 was approved by the Executive Committee of ECE at its sixty-eighth meeting, 30 April 2014, the Group of Experts agreed that no changes were needed to the work plan for 2014–2015 with the exception of the revised timeline proposed for the work of the Task Force on Best Practice Guidance in Reducing Gas Leaks along the Gas Value Chain (see agenda item 6). To the extent possible, the Task Forces are invited to present their interim reports to the informal consultation of the Committee on Sustainable Energy in May in order to ensure that all progress and results are conveyed to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France, December 2015.

29. The Group of Experts invited the Bureau, in cooperation with the secretariat and in consultation with member States, to prepare a draft work plan for the period 2016–17 and present it to the Group of Experts at its third session.

30. The Group of Experts invites member States and other stakeholders to submit to the Bureau concrete proposals for future work.

XVI. Preparations for the third session (agenda item 14)

31. The third session of the Group of Experts will be held in early 2016, in March or April, and will focus on the work of the four task forces with the objective of presenting concise, policy-oriented outcome papers on the different topics. The agenda will merge those items on which the secretariat could provide short background notes (i.e., agenda item 4 and 12, and agenda items 10 and 11), so that the discussion can focus on the above-mentioned policy papers.

XVII. Other business (agenda item 15)

32. No other business was raised.

XVIII. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations (agenda item 16)

33. The Chair confirmed the previously agreed conclusions and recommendations.

XIX. Adoption of the report (agenda item 17)

34. The draft meeting report was circulated and adopted at the meeting. After editing, it will be posted on the ECE natural gas website2.